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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY MONTHLY BRIEFINGS, APRIL 2009

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1. (U) Summary: This is the South African Environment, Science and Technology Monthly Briefings Newsletter, April 2009, Volume 4, Number 4, prepared by the U.S. Embassy Pretoria, South Africa.

Topics of the newsletter:

- ANC OFFICIAL ARRESTED IN ABALONE BUST
- SADC SKIPPER FINED R1.5M FOR SHARK-FINING
- REGIONAL FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT EXERCISE - A HUGE SUCCESS
- WESTERN CAPE TO ENCOURAGE AQUACULTURE
- SOUTH AFRICA TO LAUNCH NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE
- SOUTH AFRICA ENACTS SCRAP TIRE REGULATIONS
- VAN SCHALKWYK REAFFIRMS SOUTH AFRICAN POSITIONS ON UNFCC ANNEX
- NEW NATIONAL PARK PROCLAIMED
- CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE CENTER UNVEILED
- BABOONS THREATEN PUBLIC IN FALSE BAY
- BOUNDLESS SOUTH AFRICA EXPEDITION
- PRE-HISTORIC INSECTS ON DISPLAY
- NEW SATELLITE ANTENNA LAUNCHED
- MONTHLY FACTOID

ANC Official Arrested in Abalone Bust

1. (U) ANC Western Cape Regional Treasurer Simphiwe Kalolo was arrested in Hermanus with nearly 2500 kg of illegal abalone in his possession. South African Police service (SAPS) Senior Superintendent Pindelwa Mayakala said the SAPS Marine Unit spotted Kalolo early Sunday morning driving a car plastered with ANC stickers and a poster of Jacob Zuma. When they tried to arrest him, he fled. The estimated street value of the confiscated abalone is R 329,000 (\$32,000). Media reports say Kalolo has a reputation as a "well-heeled party animal, who wore brand names clothes and had lots of girlfriends." Kalolo earned R 30,000 (\$3,000) monthly as a strategic advisor to the Overberg District Mayor, but was fired after his arrest.

2. (U) ANC Regional Secretary Latola Henricks confirmed that Kalolo

was the ANC Regional Treasurer and said he would keep his ANC position until after the trial. Abalone poaching is rampant in the area. Many young men from informal settlement are divers, often swimming to far-off Dyer Island where abalone is easier to find. Police say the abalone is sold for drugs to traders who sell it to Chinese triads. One poacher was surprised Kalolo had the abalone on his car seat. He said, "You don't know when you are going to get to a roadblock and that is why poachers usually keep poached abalone in the trunk."

SADC Skipper Fined R1.5M for Shark-Fining

13. (U) The skipper of a Taiwanese vessel was fined R1.5 million when 1.6 tons of dried shark fins were discovered on the vessel after it docked in Cape Town harbor in March 2009. Department of Environmental and Tourism Affairs (DEAT) officials said this was the largest fine ever imposed for fishing permit violations and that the 1.6 tons was the largest amount of illegal shark fins ever seized in South Africa. DEAT officials noted that the amount of dried shark fins aboard the ship indicated it had captured at least thirty tons of sharks, nearly fifteen times what the crew claims to have caught. DEAT officials said the vessel would be blacklisted internationally and the captain would be charged with a criminal offense. TRAFFIC Africa Senior Program Officer Markus Burgener welcomed the fine, noting that a recent TRAFFIC report said shark fining results in an unsustainable level of shark killing. Shark fins are estimated to be worth between \$400-700 per kilogram. Qbe worth between \$400-700 per kilogram.

Regional Fisheries Enforcement Exercise
- A Huge Success

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14. (U) South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania fisheries inspectors held a 31-day sea patrol exercise along Africa's eastern coast aboard South Africa's environmental enforcement vessel Sarah Baartman from February to March. The goal was to improve and strengthen fisheries surveillance and law enforcement in the SADC region. DEAT officials reported that inspectors arrested six vessels and inspected 40 others. One seizure along the Tanzanian coast resulted in the recovery of more than 290 tons of illegally-harvested blue fin tuna. The inspectors arrested two South African hake hand-line vessels off Mossel Bay, and a prawn fishing boat off the Mozambique coast.

Western Cape to Encourage Aquaculture

15. (U) The Western Cape Provincial government has introduced a new aquaculture strategy establishing aquaculture development zones where fish farms will be concentrated. There are currently fifty-nine aquaculture farms, producing primarily abalone, trout, freshwater crayfish, oysters, mussels and seaweed products. The government believes aquaculture projects can be increased, and projects that output can grow from the current 2,500 tons to 90,000 tons/year. Western Cape Finance and Tourism MEC Garth Strachan said the industry is currently characterized by "overregulation, inappropriate and non-transparent application of legal instruments and uncoordinated institutional environment."

16. (U) Western Cape aquaculture strategy will emphasize tax rebates or subsidies. Masifundise Development Trust Director Naseegh Jaffer said these rebates would promote projects by smaller investors. He noted that the strategy will "pre-zone" certain areas with the government assisting the private sector by identifying suitable zones. Jaffer said one natural area for aquaculture would be from Gansbbaai to Mosel Bay in the southern Cape. He stated that non-indigenous species of fish would be considered, depending on market demand, and environmental and risk assessments.

South Africa to Launch New Electric Vehicle

¶7. (U) South African government spokesman Themba Maseko announced an Inter-Ministerial Committee will assess investing in the "Joule", South Africa's first battery-powered car. Ministries participating on the Committee include DEAT, Minerals and Energy (DME), Science and Technology (DST), Trade and Industry (DTI), Treasury and Transport. The Joule was first unveiled at the Paris Motor Show in 2008, and more recently at the National Climate Change Conference in Johannesburg. The Joule, designed to be a zero-emissions vehicle, will be Africa's first locally-manufactured-and-assembled car. South Africa-born automotive designer Keith Helfet, in partnership with Optimal Energy, a Cape Town based private company, designed the six-seat multipurpose vehicle, which will be powered by a normal 220-volt home outlet battery. A fully-charged battery will have a 200 km driving range. The Gauteng provincial government has expressed an interest in placing the first fleet order. Gauteng is also being evaluated as a possible site for the first assembly plant.

South Africa Enacts Scrap Tire Regulations

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¶8. (U) The South African Government is drafting regulations to facilitate environmentally-friendly scrap tire collection and disposal. Proposed tire levies would range between R15.00 (\$1.50) and R140.00 (\$14.00). South African Tire Recycling Project Chief Executive Etienne Human noted that the tire collection program would be implemented in phases, starting with car, busses and truck tires. Human said industry supports the program and that discussions with mining companies will be held to determine how to economically collect and recycle mine tires, because they are so large. Human stated the government would implement the program by the end this year, and that the scrap tire collection program could begin by mid-2010.

Van Schalkwyk Reaffirms South African
Positions on UNFCCC Annex

¶9. (U) South African DEAT Minister Marthinus Van Schalkwyk announced at a recent climate change conference that South Africa is not amenable to creating new classifications of countries under the

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United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He said that the UNFCCC created only two categories of parties - Annex I for developed countries, and Annex II for developing countries, and that any attempt to redefine or dilute the UNFCCC's "common but differentiated responsibilities" could raise political issues beyond climate change. Van Schalkwyk emphasized the need to establish a legally binding instrument for measurable, reportable, finance, technology and capacity support from developed to developing countries.

¶10. (U) Van Schalkwyk said, "Signals from President Barack Obama have been encouraging, although in substance the US is still on a zero reduction below 1990 levels by 2020 - a level viewed as unacceptable". He added that no one disputes that emissions from developing countries are growing rapidly, and no nation has a plausible excuse for not doing its fair share in carbon reductions. He said South Africa as a developing country is taking its responsibility very seriously, and is making serious contributions in the fight for carbon emissions reduction.

New National Park Proclaimed

¶11. (U) DEAT established a new Garden Route National Park (GRNP) in

Knysna, Eastern Cape province, combining 52,500 hectares of newly-proclaimed land and 68,000 hectares of the Tsitsikama and the Wilderness National Parks. The area has diverse biomes including indigenous forests, lake and marine protected areas, lowland fynbos and mountain water catchment areas. DEAT Minister Van Schalkwyk said DEAT has invested over R411 million (\$41.1 million) in park infrastructure. The South African government has increased financial assistance for national parks from R85.6 million (\$8.5 million) in 2004/05 to R205 million (\$20.5 million) in 2009/10. With the addition of this new park, protected land areas in South Africa will increase from six to eight percent

Carbon Capture and Storage Center Unveiled

¶12. (U) DME Minister Buyelwa Sonjica opened a carbon capture and storage research center in Johannesburg at the end of March. Sonjica said that although South Africa is a coal-based economy, major coal producers "appreciate that carbon capture could help their industries in the future." South Africa will demonstrate the new technology through a pilot program injecting carbon into rocks. Sonjica said the government hopes to have a demonstration project by ¶2020. DME reports that South Africa emits over 400 million tons of carbon per annum, sixty percent of which could be available for storage. The International Energy Agency described the center as, "one of the most promising options for mitigating emissions in the longer term".

Baboons Threaten Public in False Bay

¶13. (U) A baboon jumped through an open window into car filled with passengers at Millers Point on April 13, 2009. Observers said the driver had been feeding the baboon prior to the event. As the passengers screamed, the baboon ransacked the car searching for more food. Eventually the baboon exited back through the window. Baboon researchers have been calling for large signs warning the public that it is dangerous to feed baboons. They are also seeking an increase in the fine from R 500 (\$60) to at least R 5,000 (\$600). University of Cape Town baboon researcher Esm Beamish said, "This is concrete evidence that people feed baboons and that is why we have serious problems with that particular troop." Beamish added that baboons have learned to associate vehicles with food and are able to open car doors easily. Beamish said although the baboons will not "unlearn" that behavior, they will quit getting into cars if they no longer receive food in return. She noted that "the minute people feed a baboon; it views that person as subordinate because in a wild troop only the subordinate baboons give away food."

Boundless South Africa Expedition

¶14. (U) The four-month SADC-sponsored Boundless Southern Africa Expedition will set out in May 2009 from Durban. The goal of the expedition is to promote tourism and investment in the seven SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA), i.e., areas straddling two or more international borders where natural and cultural resources

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are managed collaboratively. SADC Tourism Ministers in 2005 endorsed a TFCA Development Strategy to consolidate marketing, infrastructure development and investment. Boundless Southern Africa is the consolidated TFCA marketing brand launched in May 2008 with a secretariat hosted by South Africa's DEAT. The expedition, led by National Geographic Travel staff member Kingsley Holgate will start at the National Tourism Indaba in Durban on May 11, 2009 and end at the mouth of the Orange River in August 2009. The ten thousand kilometer expedition will cover nine countries, seven Transfrontier Conservation Areas and thirty National Parks and Nature Reserves. The expedition will distribute mosquito nets to pregnant mothers and children under five, and will donate mobile

libraries to communities around the TFCA.

Pre-Historic Insects on Display

¶15. (U) Cockroaches, flies, wasps and other insects from one hundred million years ago are on display at a new exhibit in Maropeng's Cradle of Humankind. Wits University paleo-entomologist Dr. Ian McKay put together the exhibit, which includes prehistoric insect fossils found throughout southern Africa. One exhibit features the griffen fly, a dragonfly look-alike with a wingspan of 70 cm (27.6 inches). Dr. McKay commented that prehistoric insects grew to such large sizes because oxygen concentrations in the atmosphere were higher, allowing for higher plant growth. McKay noted that the insects that first appeared on earth approximately 400 million years ago would have been recognizable today as insects. He stated that insects suddenly grew enormous about 300 million years ago.

¶16. (U) The only insect that has remained the same size over four hundred million years is the cockroach, which looks today much like it did in prehistoric times. The exhibit includes two live cockroaches and two fossil roaches found in the Karoo so that visitors can compare them. The star attraction in the exhibit is the Orapa block discovered in the Orapa diamond mine in Botswana. That site is considered one of the richest in the world for insect fossils. McKay said the site was once a volcanic lake. Insects would end up in the "lake," be trapped in the sediment and then fossilized. The Orapa block contains the fossils of over forty different insect species, including wasps, and scarab beetles. Only one-third of the species in the Orapa block have been identified. The exhibit stays open through July.

New Satellite Antenna Launched

¶17. (U) The South African Satellite Application Center (SAC), a division of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) established a new X-band satellite tracking antenna. SAC has erected a 7.3 meter diameter X-band satellite dish at a cost of R22 million (\$2.2 million). CSIR engineers worked with French company In-SNEC to install the dish. CSIR President Sibusiso Sibisi noted that the satellite will enable CSIR to acquire valuable data to support national, regional, and global priorities. The new dish receives data from France's SPOT-4 and SPOT-5, the joint Brazilian and Chinese CBERS-2B and the joint Argentina/Brazil/Danish/French/Italian/US SAC-C satellites. DST Minister Mosebudi Mangena emphasized that South Africa's goal is to become a global player in the earth observation satellites. SAC has become a global player in the earth observation satellites. SAC has seventeen other antennas in addition to this new dish.

Monthly Factoid

¶18. (U) Table Mountain alone has over 1,500 species of plants, more than the entire United Kingdom. (www.larktours.com)

La Lime